

Message Text

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12

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00

FRB-03 /104 W

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R 220930Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2308

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0720

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ENRG, MT

SUBJECT: LIBYA-MALTA MEDIAN LINE DISPUTE

REF: TRIPOLI 150

1. WE UNDERSTAND FROM EXXON VP GREENWALD, WHO HAS BEEN IN TRIPOLI LAST FEW DAYS FOR TALKS WITH MINISTER OF PETROLEUM MABROUK, THAT PETROLEUM MINISTRY SENT A LETTER RECENTLY TO SEVERAL COMPANIES WHICH ARE EXPLORING UNDER MALTESE LICENSE IN OFFSHORE AREAS CLAIMED BY LIBYA. THE COMPANIES INCLUDE TEXACO AND CITIES SERVICE. THE LETTER REPORTEDLY CALLS ON THE COMPANIES TO STOP EXPLORATION OR LIBYA WILL TAKE "ALL MEASURES NECESSARY" TO PROTECT ITS RIGHTS.

2. EXXON HAS BEEN RESISTING LIBYAN DEMANDS THAT IT EXPLORE IN THE AREAS UNDER DISPUTE UNTIL THE MATTER HAS BEEN SOLVED BY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO STATES INVOLVED (REFTEL). GREENWALD SAID, HOWEVER, THAT DURING HIS LAST MEETING WITH MABROUK HE HAD AGREED TO "TAKE ANOTHER LOOK" AT THIS POLICY, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND WE HAD IMPRESSION THAT EXXON MAY NOW BE WILLING TO DO

SOME EXPLORATION IF A WILLING SUBCONTRACTOR CAN BE FOUND. THINKING OUT LOUD WITH US, GREENWALD WONDERED WHETHER IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO GET THE LIBYAN NATIONAL OIL COMPANY ITSELF TO DO THE WORK.

3. MALTESE EMBASSY HERE SAYS THAT LIBYANS ARE STILL STONE-WALLING MALTESE IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE. MALTESE SAY THEY ARE WILLING TO HAVE DISPUTE SUBMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION; ON THE OTHER HAND, MABROUK TOLD GREENWALD THAT LIBYANS HAD PROPOSED ARBITRATION AND HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN BY MALTESE.

4. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF THE CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN QADHAFI AND MINTOFF, DISPUTE SEEMS UNLIKELY TO GET OUT OF HAND. MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM LETTER IS STRONGLY WORDED, HOWEVER, AND MAY FORESHADOW AN ATTEMPT BY THE LIBYANS TO INTERFERE IN SOME WAY WITH MALTESE-LICENSED EXPLORATION IN THE ZONE TO WHICH THEY LAY CLAIM.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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06 JUL 2006

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